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# FOOD STAMPS TO END HUNGER

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE • FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE

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## *What it is . . .*

During a period of great economic well-being, many Americans still have incomes too small to meet their minimum food needs.

The Food Stamp Program, administered nationally by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, helps to get more food to low-income families in the United States.

The program is an effective way of safeguarding the health of the Nation's low-income families through better nutrition. Recently, it has been improved significantly so that persons taking part in it now pay less and get more.

## *Where it's needed . . .*

The Food Stamp Program has expanded continually and methodically into counties and independent cities that have requested it through their State welfare agencies, pay local administrative costs of certifying eligible people, and handle the issuance and accounting of Federal food coupons ("food stamps"). FNS has direct responsibility for authorizing food retailers and wholesalers to take part in the program.

ST-34 5-19



ST-2366-2

## *Who is eligible . . .*

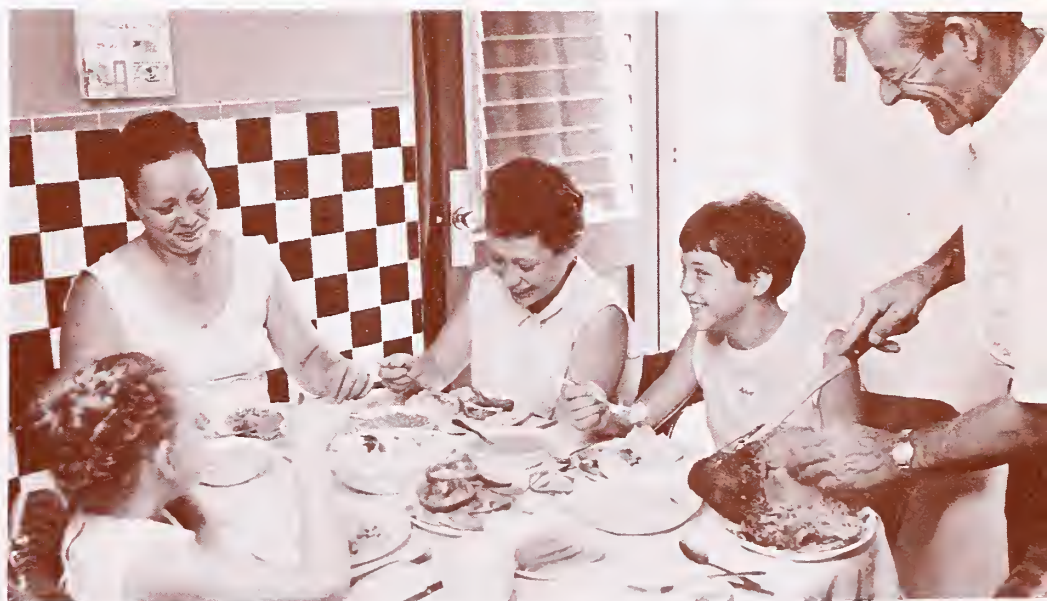
Families and individuals who are determined by State welfare agencies to be in need of food help may choose to take part in the Food Stamp Program. Generally, those getting some type of public or general assistance under a State's welfare program are eligible, as long as they are living in a household and prepare food for home consump-

tion. Other families may also be eligible if their income does not exceed stated amounts. The income limits are worked out by the State and approved by USDA. They must be in line with standards used by the State in its own welfare programs.





*A food stamp applicant is authorized to take part in the Food Stamp Program (Top photo ST-3446-7). After being found eligible, he presents his authorization card and cash for stamps at the food stamp issuance office (ST-3446-16). He pays for his food with food stamps (ST-3935-19).*



*Through the Food Stamp Program this family enjoys more nutritious and tasty foods at mealtime (ST-3935-4).*





*These are reproductions of the food stamp coupons, issued in denominations of 50 cents and two dollars. No change in cash may be given for coupons. If an amount less than 50 cents is required, the shopper decides whether to pay it in cash or use a 50-cent coupon and accept a credit slip for the difference to be used for future purchase of eligible items (BN-16424).*

Once a family becomes eligible for the Food Stamp Program, designated members of the family may obtain coupon books on presentation of proper identification. By using stamps, low-income people get a lot more food without spending any more money than they were previously spending for food.



*With good planning, people who use food stamps can stretch their food dollars (ST-3471-12, right photo, and ST-3444-14).*



## Starting in a new area

It takes a while for residents of an area to get food coupons after the area has been named to enter the Food Stamp Program. Several things must be done first. State officials arrange for a staff to certify applicants and decide where and how coupons will be issued to eligible families. Applicants are interviewed to determine eligibility and how much they must pay toward their food stamp coupons.

While this is going on, FNS food stamp employees work with retail and wholesale food merchants, bankers, welfare agents, and others who will be involved in the program to explain their part in the operation.

The community itself prepares for and works

with the new food purchasing medium. Educational informational support among all participating governmental bodies and the general public is obtained.

Home economists and others on the staff of local consumer and nutrition education agencies are enlisted to tell recipients how to buy good food for balanced diets and how to use the coupons economically. Bank and retail food employees learn how to handle coupons.

Though the Food Stamp Program has spread to a number of new areas in recent years, USDA's Commodity Distribution Program still provides food to low-income people in many areas where there is no Food Stamp Program.



*Information and education play an important role when food coupons move into a new area. A FNS representative talks with the editor of a grocer publication about the Food Stamp Program. Other information goes out in newspapers and on radio and television (N-55252).*



*Local public welfare department workers are briefed on how the Food Stamp Program works. State officials establish eligibility requirements for low-income families who want to participate and establish procedures for certifying families (N-55283).*





*A nutritionist instructs food stamp users about basic foods needed to maintain good health. She tells them how to buy food for balanced diets and how to use the coupons in the most economical way (ST-3387-22). Volunteers from the community and workers from other government agencies make house to house visits to encourage nonparticipating families to take part in the Food Stamp Program (ST-5029-11).*





# FOOD STAMP PROGRAM



All of us must eat. But some people do not have money to buy all the food they need for good health. The United States Department of Agriculture's Food Stamp Program is a way to help these people buy more and better food.

## WHO CAN GET FOOD STAMPS?

Families who have low incomes, such as:

- Families with no jobs.
- Families with part-time work.
- Families that do not earn much money.
- Families on public welfare.
- Many people on Social Security or with small pensions.

## HOW DOES A FAMILY FIND OUT ABOUT FOOD STAMPS?

The head of the family goes to the welfare office. There, someone will tell him about getting food stamps. He should bring papers to show:

- Where the family lives.
- How many are in the family.
- How much income they have each month.
- How much the family is paying for doctor's bills and rent.

## HOW DOES A FAMILY GET FOOD STAMPS?

To take part in this program, a family must have a place to cook meals. The family buys food stamps which will cost about the same as the family pays each month for food, but the family gets more food stamps than it pays for.

The welfare office tells the family how much to pay for stamps and how many stamps the family gets. The total worth of stamps depends on how many people are in the family and how much income the family has each month.



## HOW ARE FOOD STAMPS USED?

Anyone in the family can take the food stamp book to a local food store and use the stamps just like money to buy food.

Food stamps can buy almost all food. They cannot buy liquor, beer, cigarettes, soap, or other things sold in the food store that are not food. And stamps cannot be sold to the grocer or anyone else.

Most stores in a food stamp county or city will be glad to accept the stamps.

## ARE ALL FAMILIES TREATED THE SAME WAY IN THIS PROGRAM?

The rules of the program are the same for all families. The family's need is the only thing that counts. No family may be denied food stamps or be dropped from the program just because any member of the family is active in efforts to get fuller citizen's benefits. Also, even if they are not able to get a wage statement from their employers, low-income families can still get food stamps. No family may be put in a special place in line or in a separate line or told to come on a different day because of race, color, or national origin.

If someone is treated unfairly in the Food Stamp Program a letter telling all about it should be sent to the Secretary of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

## HOW CAN A COUNTY GET THIS PROGRAM STARTED?

The Food Stamp Program is one of two programs of the Food and Nutrition Service, USDA, for needy families. The other is called the "Commodity Distribution Program." A county can have either one of these programs, but not both of them at the same time.

State and local welfare offices decide if there is to be a Food Stamp Program.

If families ask about food stamps, the public welfare office will know that food help is wanted in the county.



Most food stores and markets in food stamp areas accept the coupons. Food Stamp customers are the same as cash customers. The additional food dollars that flow into the economy of a food stamp area benefit all who choose to take part in the Program.



N-55613

ST-3442-14.



ST-3443-23





ST-3444-4

